

**Pinedale Anticline Working Group
Designated Federal Officer Briefing 2/7/2012**

Project Updates

Annual Development Plans, Anticline – The Pinedale Field Office (PFO) has received the Anticline Operators' development plans for the period between Feb 2012 and Feb 2013. The operators have completed development one mile north of the New Fork River Corridor in DA-2 and, as per the ROD, have proposed development in DA-3 south of the river. Decision on this request will be made at the February Development Annual Planning Meeting.

Electrification of the Anticline – Rocky Mountain Power (RMP) has proposed to build 17 miles of electric double-circuit 25kv distribution lines and eight miles of other distribution lines to provide power to eight distinct locations on the south end of the Anticline, beginning just north of Paradise Road and proceeding south and east along the backbone of the Anticline to Highway 191. RMP is also proposing approximately five miles of 69 kV transmission line from Highway 351 to the Boulder South County Road 23-106, a substation south of Highway 351 and west of the North Jonah Road, and a 10 mile reroute of the authorized Paradise 230 kV transmission line. Currently, this line is authorized to parallel Highway 191 to Highway 351 then follow Highway 351 to Paradise Road. The reroute would have the line go from Highway 191 west to the Falcon Compressor area and then north along the backbone of the Anticline to Highway 351 parallel to the above mentioned 25 kV distribution line. The BLM PFO has developed an interdisciplinary team and is working with the third-party contractor to initiate the development of the environmental assessment. The BLM initiated public scoping for the project on January 6 and held an open house to allow the public to better familiarize themselves with the project on February 1. **The scoping period closed on February 6.** After reviewing the scoping comments, the third party contractor, in coordination with BLM, will begin writing the Environmental Assessment. Initiation of construction in the summer of 2012 is targeted.

Normally Pressured Lance (NPL) EIS – Proposal to drill 3500 wells south and west of the Jonah Field. Scoping report is on the web. The BLM held meetings with counties on November 9, 2011 to discuss transportation planning. The BLM is working with a third party contractor to create the alternatives that will be considered in the EIS. We are also working with DEQ and EPA to determine the effect of the recent EPA decision on ozone nonattainment area for Sublette County on the alternatives and schedule for the EIS.

LaBarge EIS – Proposal to drill 838 wells in the Big Piney – LaBarge area. Contractor is working on developing alternatives for the EIS. The pending EPA decision regarding non-attainment for the Upper Green River area, which includes the La Barge Project area, has affected the completion schedule. The BLM is working cooperatively with DEQ and EPA to resolve key details about how the nonattainment designation will be managed and what changes will be needed in the alternatives.

Encana's Multi-well Pad Proposal – Encana has proposed to conduct year-around drilling on the Northern portion of the Jonah Field. Encana has not fully developed this end of the field due to the wildlife timing restrictions limiting the time allowed for development. Their proposal is to

drill multiple wells from 12 distinct locations with up to 14 wells from a single pad. This is a variance from their general past practice of drilling one well per pad but the proposed action would allow for completing the development of the Jonah Field sooner and would reduce surface disturbance. Encana drafted a proposal in July 15 but a change in plans has delayed them from completing the proposal. Once the proposal is finalized, the BLM will conduct a 30-day scoping period and work with a third-party contractor to develop the EA. We are also working here to understand if/how the non-attainment designation would affect this project.

Rands Butte Helium Plant - The plant is now owned and operated by Denbury after the sale from Cimarex. The plant was scheduled to be online by the end of 2011 but it is now scheduled to be operational by the end of February 2012. Denbury has contacted us regarding drilling another well and has indicated they have plans to market the CO₂ from the Riley Ridge Unit (which would require a CO₂ pipeline) but have not presented anything as of yet for either of these proposals.

Landscape Planning – This process includes Range and Transportation management planning and is directed at the Boulder, North LaBarge and Ryegrass landscapes. Status is as follows.

1. Boulder – Data collection complete. EA in progress. Estimated completion 9/30/12. Interested public meetings to include additional scoping will be initiated in the early spring.
2. North LaBarge – Presently in the data collection and monitoring phase 2012, 2013. PFC was completed in 2011 Est. completion of EA 9/30/2014.
3. Ryegrass – Presently in the data collection and monitoring phase in 2011 and 2012. Est. completion of EA 9/30/2013.

Wildlife Habitat Projects

Wyoming Range Aspen Regeneration Project – Aspen habitat regeneration will occur in two phases:

1. Camp Creek underwent mechanical treatment in 2010 and was broadcast burned in spring 2011. In 2012, unburned areas within the Camp Creek treatment areas will be treated. In addition, the Upper Billies allotment will be broadcast burned in 2012. Allotments will be rested for two years and monitored post burn.
2. Miller Creek will undergo mechanical treatment in summer 2012. Treatment will consist of conifer removal and piling. Piles will be burned when conditions warrant.
3. The BLM is looking to cooperative funding sources such as the RMEF to leverage non-federal funding to compete for additional funds from sources such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and will be focusing efforts in transitional ranges for Mesa Mule deer.

Muddy Creek Vegetation Treatment – Environmental assessment and decision record signed in September 2011. This 300 acre spike treatment will be conducted in fall of 2012 to improve mule deer habitat. In cooperation with Game and Fish, a 10-year 20,000 acre habitat improvement plan has been developed and scoping for projects will begin in spring. Implementation is targeted for 2014.

Anticline Mule Deer Habitat Enhancement - Phase I and Phase II fertilization treatment project. Phase I, which involved the treatment of 1,000 acres on the Mesa, was completed in November 2011. Application was at a 40 pounds/acre rate of nitrogen. To respond to various concerns regarding the validation of effects of this treatment method, data collection efforts will be expanded during the next two field seasons and may be contracted to a third party. A solicitation for proposals was sent out in early January 2012 asking for proposals for data collection. There has been interest from several institutions and groups.

Mesa Mule Deer Habitat Improvement Project – Habitat condition assessments were completed in the Ryegrass/Soap holes area the summer of 2011 and a report of findings was provided at the October 2011 Wildlife annual planning meeting. From this assessment, Pinedale Anticline Project Office (PAPO) staff has developed project proposals which involve 8,000 to 9,000 acres of habitat improvements. The target for initiation of work is 2013. This represents the first phase of this aspect of the sequential mitigation process. The target is to develop a ten-year habitat improvement plan; additional habitat assessments will be completed in 2013 towards that goal. Upcoming habitat assessment areas will include private lands, particularly in areas where conservation easements have been acquired and in US Forest Service managed lands. Staff is also continuing to evaluate options for habitat improvement in the Pinedale Anticline Project Area on both the crest and the flanks. Funding for these projects is being requested from the PAPO mitigation fund, BLM appropriated dollars, and The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Wildlife Friendly Fencing Inventory – The PFO, Jonah Interagency Office (JIO)/PAPO, and Wyoming Land Trust will continue their partnership to inventory fencing on BLM lands for the purpose of modifying fences so that wildlife can migrate freely throughout the PFO. BLM staff recently submitted a fence modification project focused on the conversion of fence line to wildlife friendly specifications on Mesa crucial winter range to multiple funding sources. No decision on the allocation of funds has been made and the search for additional funding is ongoing.

Well Spud Report – Since 2/3/11

As of January, a total of 2,404 wells have been spud on the Anticline; 1,115 since the signing of the ROD in September 2008 and 334 during 2011.

Anticline Monitoring

Sage-grouse Winter Concentration – The PFO, Rock Springs Field Office and JIO/PAPO biologists participated in Sage-grouse winter concentration flights within a two mile buffer of the proposed NPL gas field and within the boundaries of six lek complexes associated with the Pinedale Anticline Project Area (PAPA). Over 400,000 acres were covered by these flights. Data is currently being processed.

Aerial Lek Searches – Aerial lek searches will be conducted within an 11 mile buffer of the proposed NPL gas field and in two yet to be selected lek complexes associated with the PAPA.

Winter Range Closure – Over 500,000 acres of crucial winter range in the PFO are closed to motorized vehicles each year to minimize impacts and stress to wintering wildlife. In addition to law enforcement officer (LEO) efforts to patrol this vast area, PFO staff has conducted weekend winter patrols to help generate awareness and assist in patrolling the area for violators. As of January 22, 23 people have been contacted in the field by the staff team and were given maps and a copy of the federal register to inform them of the closures. In addition, from Jan 15, 2012 to Jan 25, 2012, two detailing LEO's were brought in to increase the law enforcement presence around the PFO winter range closure areas and for regular patrols. The purpose was to educate the public and catch repeat offenders. 75% of patrols were targeted at winter ranges and the other 25% focused in the gas fields.

Recent Additions to the PAPO Website – Wildlife reports for the 2011 season have been added as well as the minutes from the October 26, 2011 Wildlife Annual Planning Meeting. There will be significant additional updates between now and the next PAWG meeting.

PAPO Interagency Staff Report of Activities

PAPO interagency staff Wildlife Mitigation Biologist Therese Hartman with Game & Fish completed contract renewals for mule deer, pronghorn, and snow and traffic monitoring for 2011-2012.

In January 2012, 30 mule deer and 30 pronghorn were captured and fitted with new generation GPS collars. These collars will stay on the animals for multiple years to reduce the need for annual captures. Additionally, we are planning to recapture the same animal when it is time to replace the collar so that we can follow the same animal through time and better assess the response to development activity.

Hartman coordinated with the BLM wildlife biologist and conducted sage-grouse winter concentration aerial surveys in January. Lek surveys and lek searches will be completed in April and May.

The 2012 raptor, pygmy rabbit, white-tailed prairie dog monitoring and grant/contracts are being prepared with raptor nest monitoring to begin in April. The bald eagle winter roost monitoring report is due in March and will be posted on the PAPO web page when it becomes available.

PAPO staff has been reviewing the Anticline Wildlife Monitoring and Mitigation Plan, and have been coordinating with operators to develop an update to this Plan. The target is to post the updated document on the PAPO web page by March 1st.

Therese has also been working with Windy Kelley, PAPO interagency staff Department of Agriculture representative, on data evaluation for reclamation monitoring on the Anticline. Hartman and Kelley will present a summary of 2011 monitoring during the Development Annual Planning Meeting that will be held at the PFO on Feb. 23, 2012.

Hartman, Eric Decker, JIO/PAPO coordinator, together with Kelley met with several operators to discuss their reclamation and general observations during the summer.

Database Manager Duane Bays took a BLM job in Utah in November 2011 and was replaced by Theresa Nallick. Operator workshops on the Pinedale Anticline Data Management System (PADMS) were held during fall 2011. PADMS is a database repository for disturbance and reclamation shapefiles as well as associated reclamation site monitoring forms and photos that are required. PADMS is currently not available for use by the public but it is anticipated PADMS will be available for public use later this year. Nallick and Kelley have been working extensively with the Anticline operators and their contractors to enter data into PADMS. Entering data into the database has been a significant undertaking and teamwork by the operators, the contractors, the PAPO and the US Geological Survey to work 'tweaks' out of the system.

BLM Wildlife Biologist Theresa Gulbrandson developed a PAPO project proposal on another wildlife-friendly fence project for the Mesa. Gulbrandson also prepared environmental documentation for the Mesa seed trial project (20 acres on a pipeline ROW) that had a seed mix specifically formulated to benefit mule deer. She has also developed two project funding requests to support the Mesa Mule Deer Habitat Improvement Project

Based on the experiences gained implementing the Monitoring for Reclamation Success guide, PAPO staff in December submitted an Adaptive Management request. The Pinedale Field Manager convened a review team who has been evaluating the request. The review team includes Eric Decker (JIO/PAPO Project Coordinator), Windy Kelley (JIO/PAPO), Kellie Roadifer (BLM) and Sherm Karl (BLM National Operations Center). Public comment will be solicited following completion of the Review Team process.

In addition, PAPO team members have been evaluating the DEQ air analyst funding request, and a decision on this proposal is due shortly.

The PAPO have received 15 project proposals for potential funding in 2012 (see below). PAPO staff is also developing revised project selection criteria (with increased emphasis on selection of mule deer projects). For 2012 proposals, PAPO staff will be evaluating and prioritizing project funding requests and generating recommendations for the PAPO board who will be meeting in Pinedale in May of 2012.

Decker has helped coordinate meetings over the winter with BLM biologists and Game & Fish staff to provide for a better understanding on how Wyoming Range and Sublette Mule Deer projects will be addressing NEPA, cultural survey and other project requirements.

Staffing Update

- Hired two Natural Resource Specialists – Dean Whitt and Joseph Debebe.
- Hired two Petroleum Engineering Technicians – Eric Ashley and Michael Goldthright.
- Hired a Petroleum Accounting Technician – Melissa Anderson.
- Vice Kuhnel Archaeologist Jim Collis on board
- Vice Schulz Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist detailer from Dillon on board until early March.

- Vice Robbins Rangeland Management Specialist has been selected and starts Feb. 26

Calendar

- February 23 - Annual Planning Meeting for Development
- May 2, 3 - PAPO board meeting in Pinedale
- May 14-17 - WLCI Science Workshop

PAPO Projects Submitted for 2012 Funding (as of Jan. 24, 2012)

Name	Applicant	\$ Cost
DEQ Air Analyst position	DEQ	80,000
Mesa wildlife-friendly fence	BLM/G&F	500,000
Mule deer NEPA/Cultural	G&F	100,000
North Cottonwood Ranch C.E.	TCF	2,000,000
New Fork River Water Quality	USGS	373,950
Richie Ranch C.E.	G&F	250,000
McNinch Reservoir Expansion	McNinch L&E	700,000
Almquist VR Ranch C.E.	MaryAnne Almquist	66,299
Bousman Ranch C.E.	Bousman Livestock	59,500
Johnston C.E.	Johnston Trusts	107,500
Wilcox Ranch C. E.	Wilcox Ranch	60,340
Munn Place C.E.	Thomas Trust	195,000
Wildlife-friendly fence (phase 2)	WY Land Trust	1,857,258
Miller 67 Ranch C.E.	Miller Land/Livestock	220,500

C.E. is Conservation Easement